New York, August 24, 1915. No. 21

Published to advance the Science of cold-blooded vertebrates

THE CAPTURE OF A BASKING SHARK ON LONG ISLAND.

A fourteen-foot Basking shark, *Cetorhinus maximus*, was captured on June 29, 1915, at Westhampton Beach, on the south shore of Long Island. It had become entangled in a bluefish net operated by a local fisherman, and was hauled ashore still alive. I had the good fortune to examine it two days later as it was being cut up for removal from the beach, and obtained the head, jaws and several other parts for the American Museum for further study.

Records of *Cetorhinus* as far south as Long Island are extremely few, so that it seems desirable to call attention to the present specimen.

The shark was a male, fourteen feet in length. The caudal had been cut off before I reached the scene, so that I could not verify the exact length; but, from the measurements I made, the length was apparently as stated. The specimen was therefore small for this species, not even half grown.

The color of the shark was grayish black, a little darker above than on the sides and belly. The under side was not white, as it is stated to be in textbooks; the only white about the specimen was a triangular patch on the under side of the rostrum, extending from the mouth as a base, to a point half-way to the

tip of the snout. There were also two pale bands in the mid-ventral region, one on either side of the median line; they were about two inches in width, and had broken or jagged margins. They were confined to a portion of the ventral region, in front of the mixopterygia.

The most striking feature about the shark, to one who had never seen the species in the flesh, was the extraordinary shape of the rostrum. This was the exact form of the lead end of a bullet, and so unlike that of any other shark that it could serve as a diagnostic character equally with the enormous gill-clefts, to distinguish this species from all other sharks. It should be noted, too, that the rostrum was not short, as it is represented in textbook figures, but projected considerably in front of the mouth.

The whole surface was covered with minute tubercles, which were rough to the touch when the shark was stroked from behind forward. The tubercles were especially large at the tip of the rostrum. On the snout, both above and below, were sensory pores distributed in groups. They were transversely elongated and very large, some of them ¼ inch in width. The long, slender gill-rakers, which are so distinctive of this species, were black in color, and looked like long, finely toothed combs attached to the gill bars. The longest rays were 2⅞ inches in length. The teeth were set in the jaws in three rows, except in a few spots, where there were a few extra teeth giving the appearance of four rows.

The alimentary canal contained a large quantity of bright red material. On examination under the microscope, this resolved itself into a vast multitude of minute Crustacea (species not yet determined), whose reddish bodies lent color to the entire mass.

A few measurements, especially of the head region, may here be given: Rostrum, from front of

eye, 10¼ in. Diameter of eye, 1½ in. Front of eye to nostril, 3 in. Width of nostril, 1¼ in. Distance between inner margins of nostrils, 4¾ in. Mixopterygia, 7¼ in.

A fuller account of this specimen with photographs of the freshly-captured fish and figures of anatomical details will shortly be published.

L. HUSSAKOF,
New York, N. Y.

ON FISH-BONES IN A KINGFISHER'S NEST.

Through the kindness of Mr. S. H. Chubb of the American Museum the writer has had for examination a mass of fish-bones, scales, etc., from the recently occupied nest of a kingfisher, and has looked it through to determine the species of fish eaten in this case. The results have both an ichthyological and ornithological interest.

The nest referred to was placed in a bank about one-quarter of a mile from Van Cortlandt Lake, New York City. It was occupied by young kingfishers 29 days between the times of hatching and departure. Immediately after they had gone Mr. Chubb removed about two quarts of soil from the bottom of the nest, and from this about 220 cubic centimeters of clean bones, scales, etc., was obtained, representing probably three-quarters of all the fish remains in the nest.

The most striking single objects among the bones were the beautifully preserved tooth-bearing pharyngeals of small cyprinids, of which there were 113. The mass was carefully gone over for readily recognizable bones of other fishes and surprisingly few encountered. Lower jaw bones of 2 or 3 small pickerel (*Esox*), 3 to 5 inches in length, were noted; also the opercle of a yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*), about